



News from **SALEM COUNTY** Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 8, 2011

LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES SIGN HISTORIC AGREEMENT TO ASSIST IN EMERGENCIES

(SALEM, NJ) – Salem County is leading the way in the State to protect some of its most vulnerable citizens. Through the Salem County Office of Emergency Management, all seven Long Term Care Facilities in the County signed a historic agreement to assist one another during emergencies.

The seven facilities, Carneys Point Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Carneys Point, Eagleview Health and Rehabilitation in Pittsgrove, Friends Village in Woodstown, Golden Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Mannington, Mater Dei Nursing Home in Newfield, Merion Gardens Assisted Living in Carneys Point, and Southgate Health Care Center in Carneys Point, with leadership and assistance from the Salem County Office of Emergency Management and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services have signed the first Agreement in New Jersey involving every long term care facility in the county. That agreement will enable the residents from one facility to be sent to any other facility in Salem County if an emergency arises.

“Salem County is leading the way and setting the standard for the State in taking care of our elderly and disabled population” said Freeholder Director Lee Ware. Previously, each long term care facility had agreements with other facilities on a one to one basis. “These residents of long term care facilities need special care and this countywide agreement helps to make sure they’ll stay cared for,” stated Ware.

“What makes this agreement so special,” said Deputy Director Freeholder David Lindenmuth, Chair of the County Public Safety and Shared Services Committee, “is that the agreement also opens the door for Salem County to enter into agreements with other Counties and their facilities, ultimately potentially creating a statewide partnership to help each other out during emergencies.”

Jeff Pompper, the Salem County Emergency Management Coordinator and Executive Director of the Salem County Department of Emergency Services said, “Salem County has had several facilities that have experienced emergencies over the past three years. An agreement like this will make life easier for everybody by allowing everybody to share the load when people are in peril. Several other Counties have said they’re interested in getting agreements with Salem County in the future to make sure that everybody’s

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helping one another because emergencies aren't scheduled and can happen to anyone anytime."

"It is crucial that long term care facilities work together to prepare for any health emergency that would interrupt operations at one or more facilities," said DHSS Assistant Commissioner Christopher Rinn. "This agreement ensures that residents of Salem County's seven long term facilities will have a safe and effective relocation in the event of a public health emergency such as a fire, flood or other natural disasters."

The Salem County Health Care Facilities Emergency Preparedness Committee, comprising the seven long term care facilities, the two hospitals (the Memorial Hospital of Salem County and Elmer Hospital), the federally qualified health center (Southern Jersey Family Medical Center), the County and municipal Offices of Emergency Management, plus the Salem County Health Department and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, was the venue for this and other agreements. The Committee has been meeting monthly for over a year and has been working together on many projects. Every facility has met with the County Office of Emergency Management to review and improve their emergency preparedness plan. They all helped to craft this agreement among others. Additionally, in June, all seven facilities participated in an exercise held at the Salem County Department of Emergency Services in Woodstown where they had the chance to talk about how they would respond to a series of both individual and group emergencies. The Committee continues to meet monthly to work on new challenges to help continue leading the way in the State.

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